JOINT FORCE TRANSFORMATION: ARE WE THERE YET?

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Joint Force Transformation: Are We There Yet?

Today's Department of Defense (DOD) is in the center of a whirlwind of change precipitated by new technologies, unsettled societal shifts, and the strategic context of the Global War on Terrorism. Analysts from all sides are calling for the U.S. military to transform itself into a more coherently joint force for the new century that is higher tech, lower cost, and more rapidly adaptable while operating across the spectrum of operations from peacekeeping to total war. However, there are many significant challenges to fully achieving this transformation.

Although defense transformation will increase joint force capabilities in the near term, its major benefits will be realized only after the parochial cultures and institutional processes of each Service are modified. Even though there are huge technological evolutions in progress and each Service is already becoming more agile and mobile, success will ultimately depend on the transformation of the mindset of military people.

When trying to understand the overall defense transformation process, one must start by defining defense transformation and by reviewing the status of transformation from Service perspectives as well as from a DOD and a joint perspective.

Defense Transformation Defined

The DOD Transformation Planning Guidance (TPG) defines transformation as follows:

A **process** that shapes the changing nature of military competition and cooperation through new combinations of concepts, capabilities, people, and organizations that exploit our nation's advantages and protect against our asymmetric vulnerabilities to sustain our strategic position, which helps underpin peace and stability in the world.

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Award-winning author and Olin Senior Fellow for National Security Studies Max Boot characterizes the desired results of joint transformation as fielding a joint force capable of the following:

...quick victory with minimal casualties on both sides. Its hallmarks are speed, maneuver, flexibility, and surprise. It is heavily reliant upon precision firepower, special forces, and psychological operations. And it strives to integrate naval, air, and land power into a seamless whole (Boot:43).

Boot further acknowledges that transformation is more than just a change or improvement in capabilities. It is also a "change in mindset" that will "harness the technological advances of the information age" (Ibid:45).

Necessity for Transformation

The new, hard-to-define, and often transnational threat that has emerged in the global environment since the end of the Cold War offers a compelling argument for the necessity of transformation. The Defense Department has essentially followed Stephen R. Covey's principle of "beginning with the end in mind" when envisioning a "leaner, more strategically agile information age force" to counter this uncertain threat (Macgregor, 2002, 219).

Defense analysts argue that not only is transformation necessary, but it also needs to happen now. Tomorrow's wars will not be like today's and the future will be here sooner than one would think or would like. In addition, transforming any large organization takes time, and the increases in efficiency and effectiveness that transformation can afford need to be felt as soon as possible, especially in light of continuing fiscal pressures (Flourney:28). However, it's debatable whether transformation will actually save money or cost more (Boot:58). Regardless, DOD has to be ready to fight the next war, not the past war. The Secretary of Defense has made joint force transformation one of his top three legislative priorities for fiscal year 2005. Specifically, he

wants a lighter, more agile, more easily deployable military force, a military culture that rewards innovation and risk-taking, and a balance of active and reserve components (Rumsfeld).

Current Status and Vision of Transformation Within Each Service and DOD

The current wave of Army transformation attempts to "holistically remake the force while holding onto its core competencies, train and equip Soldiers, and provide relevant and ready land power capability to the combatant commanders, as part of a joint team" ("U.S. Army: The Way Ahead":2). In his discussions on the subject, Army Chief of Staff (CSA) GEN Peter Schoomaker envisions a complete Army transformation, "creating a campaign quality Army with a joint and expeditionary mindset" ("U.S. Army: The Way Ahead":Foreward). He also adds that nothing is sacred except values. "As we transform the Army...some things will change, others will not. Our values will not change and they are not negotiable" (Schoomaker arrival message:2). Indeed the 18 functional area white papers (Army in 2020 Functional White Papers) presented by LTG Riggs and the Army Objective Task Force look for change through the entirety of the Army, including doctrine, organizations, training, materiel, leaders and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) (Army in 2020:Cover Letter). However, the challenge will be to see if the Army can break the "cultural paradigms" that have hindered past change (Vandergriff:1-6, 20, 109, 191, 267-268) or settle for "technological solutions as silver bullets" to compensate for a failure to change overall (Macgregor: 88, 123, 141-145, 227).

Recent announcements have heralded the first of many changes in the Army. The first announcement defined two new Army formations, one a "modular, easily deployable, brigade sized Unit of Action (UA), and the other...a higher headquarters command and control structure, called a Unit of Employment (UE)" ("U.S. Army: The Way Ahead":10).

"UAs are not fixed organizations. They can command up to 6 maneuver battalions, integrate organic and supporting ISR, fires and maneuver to close with and destroy an enemy" (Rubitsky:1). "UAs will be able to rapidly deploy as an expeditionary force and will be self-sustainable for 3-7 days" ("Army in 2020":3). "UEs are interdependent, multi-level organizations designed to command and control multiple, tailored UAs when high end operations demand campaign quality force involving joint, interagency, and multinational organizations" ("Army in 2020":10). The CSA has designated the 3rd Infantry Division as the first unit to make the transition to this new formation, transforming the three original maneuver brigades into five smaller, brigade-sized UAs (Triggs:1). Army plans call for changing all current Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and building 22 additional UAs, for a total (active and reserve component) force of 81 deployable UAs within the next four years (Schoomaker briefing:5).

These organizational change announcements were followed by the complementary decision to implement Army force stabilization. Force stabilization is made up of two initiatives: home basing and unit focused manning ("Army Announces Force Stabilization Initiative":1). Home basing "stabilizes Soldiers and families at their initial entry assignment for approximately 7 years, reducing personnel turbulence" ("Force Stabilization Soldier Information Briefing":6-8). It continues to use the current individual replacement system (IRS) to fill installation vacancies and after Soldiers reach seven years time in service, they revert to the IRS for all future assignments (Ibid:8). Unit-focused manning is a separate system that uses "life cycle management to align Soldier assignments to the BCT's 36 month operational cycle, with the Brigade Commander controlling internal turbulence" (Ibid:10-14). Soldiers are brought together at the same time to form the unit and stabilize in the unit for its entire life cycle. Headquarters, combat support, and combat service support unit Soldiers fall under a separate "cyclic management system"

that attempts to normalize training cycles by locking Soldiers into position for 12-14 months and programming losses/gains only during scheduled replacement periods" (Ibid:15-16). Army leaders believe these changes will create "more unit cohesion" and give Soldiers "greater depth versus breadth of experience by keeping them longer in key jobs" (Ibid:17-18).

The Air Force speaks less directly about transformation than does the Army. Like the Navy envisioning its future, the Air Force sees a continuous transition to follow-on weapon systems and sprinkles cultural changes with the integration of new technologies. In fact, integration is one of the Air Force core competencies. The other two are simply "developing Airmen" and technology-to-warfighting (Elliott:1). Gen John Jumper, the Air Force Chief of Staff, envisions these three things creating the "foundation upon which the Air Force organizes, trains and equips, and form[ing] the cornerstone of the Service's strengths" (Ibid:1).

These concepts eventually trickle down to several major tangible changes. The heart of combat capability according to Gen Jumper and Dr. James Roche, the Secretary of the Air Force, is the development of Airmen. That development includes increased education and training and professional development, while emphasizing the Air Force's core values of "integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do." Next, the tools of combat capability are described in the technology-to-warfighting commitment. Here Secretary Roche sees "innovation to guide research, development, and fielding of unsurpassed capabilities" (Roche:2). He envisions continued advances in low-observable technologies, space-based systems, manipulation of information, precision, and small, smart weapons. In addition, he states that the Air Force has a special ability to translate technology into operational capability, something proven repeatedly in Afghanistan and Iraq. Finally, the Air Force sees itself as a future master integrator of operations. Technology plays a big part here also with the goal of building something akin to a secure com-

bat-oriented, situational awareness-enhancing, battlefield information grid (Hobbins:4). It would ride on airborne and space-borne assets with thousands of joint and coalition nodes from an infantryman and a squad leader's vehicle on the battlefront to other combat vehicles and command and control nodes all over the theater including all the way back to home station.

Transformation is, thus far, even less foreign and less a shock to the Service culture of the Navy and Marine Corps. Both Services have been capabilities-based for years and have prided themselves on their adaptive ability to plug in specific capabilities as the need arose. Specifically, the Navy has always organized its forces into a Composite Warfare Commander concept, often as part of a carrier battle group. Organizational shifts to a more agile and responsive carrier strike group and fleet response plan do not fundamentally change the way the Navy will organize and fight. Perhaps the most fundamental shift in mindset and capabilities for the Navy since the end of the Cold War has been the shift from focusing on an open ocean, well-defined threat to focusing on operations in the littoral against an unknown enemy. This is best exemplified in the current program to convert the oldest four Trident submarines, a symbol of U.S. Cold War power, into cruise missile-shooting, special operations platforms that will conduct sustained brown water operations. Development of a new littoral combat ship also addresses this need. Other existing assets will merely be employed differently to match the capability required by the joint force commander (Macgregor:226).

The Department of the Navy "Transformation Roadmap" contains insight into the Navy and Marine Corps' current transformation focus. The concepts of Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing, all enabled by FORCEnet, will increase situational awareness and tailored capabilities for the joint force commander (U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps). While advertised as transformational concepts in the roadmap, these concepts are less revolutionary and less cultural

shocks than they are a refinement of distributed naval capabilities. Specifically, Sea Strike's goal of projecting decisive and persistent offensive firepower with immediate, agile, and sustainable operations from the sea will focus on persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, time-sensitive strike, information operations, and ship-to-objective maneuver ("Transformation Roadmap":2). Sea Shield will assure access throughout the battlespace for the joint force focusing on theater air and missile defense, littoral sea control, and homeland defense ("Transformation Roadmap":3). Sea Basing will project responsive forces worldwide by accelerating deployment and employment times and enhancing sea-borne positioning of joint assets (Ibid:4). FORCEnet will connect sensors, networks, weapons, decision aids, and warriors to accelerate speed and accuracy of decisions (Ibid). It is essentially an extension of the Network-Centric Warfare concept. The bottom line is that none of these concepts will require a significant Navy cultural or mindset shift to implement.

The Marine Corps' story is similar to the Navy's. Packaging as marine air-ground task forces for the joint force commander has always allowed for a tailored, capabilities-based force package. Organized now as expeditionary strike groups, the 21st century Marine Corps capstone concept of Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare is "the union of Marine Corps competencies, maneuver warfare philosophy, and expeditionary heritage" (U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps). As with the Navy, this is less of a cultural shock to Marines than the transformation efforts in the Army or Air Force are to those Services.

Looking at DOD as a whole, U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) has been tasked with ensuring that transformation is undertaken with a joint force (all Services, interagency, and coalition partners) perspective, rather than being undertaken by each of the Services in isolation.

JFCOM has attempted to define the future battle space that the joint force commander will face

and to combat joint force issues using a joint operations concept (JOpsC). In doing so, although still using funds from the individual Services, DOD now conducts experimentation and war games as a joint force, rather than as an individual Service. The JOpsC categories of major combat operations, stability operations, homeland security, and strategic deterrence are viewed by the DOD as the "engines of transformation" for the joint force rather than transformation of each individual Service (*Joint Operations Concepts*:17). In addition, in the Pentagon, the DOD Office of Force Transformation acts as an institutional advocate in Washington dedicated to transformation. This office ensures that Service transformation roadmaps are consistent with the JOpsC and are addressing the issue of transforming culture.

Barriers to Transformation

Whether occurring as transformation, evolution, or revolution, change inherently brings uncertainty and a natural resistance to deviate from the status quo. This is most noticeably manifested in the parochial attitudes of each Service and even within the branches of each Service because of the desire to ensure survival and a piece of the pie rather than showing the desire to transform into a truly joint force. Interservice and intraservice rivalries are real and are often manifested at the expense of joint force efficiency and capabilities. The notion of being able to attain a common joint culture "is not promising, given single-mindedness in pursuing Service transformation agendas which encourage fierce competition for scarce resource"s (Fautua: 86). Regarding parochialism, Service culture, and the effect on transformation of the joint force, special assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (NATO) and Commander, JFCOM, and Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) adjunct professor David Fautua succinctly concludes, "Without a cohesive culture of shared values that transcends Service interests and inspires purple-minded warfighters to think as a team, genuine jointness will be muted by Service

parochialism when convenient, whether on a battlefield or joint staff" (Fautua:86). Author Brig Gen Charles Dunlap takes the opposite approach to the extreme and actually warns of success in this area when he (for effect) warns of a military coup in the United States in 2012 caused by the creation of the "Unified Armed Forces" that might be an outgrowth of excessive jointness and an end to the creative and necessary tension between the Services (Dunlap:8). Of course, there is a desired limit to the subjugation of individual Service culture. There still is a need for Service culture, traditions, and experts in Service competencies within the joint force (Wilkerson:66). It is still important that each Service educate and train its members to understand and appreciate their Service-unique culture and the capabilities that they bring to the joint fight. Obviously, the right answer is a compromise between the level of parochialism found in today's military and the excessive jointness depicted by Dunlap.

These are not just anecdotal observations. Survey data collected in 2000 from 1,900 students attending seven U.S. professional military educational institutions confirms these ideas. The authors of the study, Thomas Mahnken and James FitzSimonds, found that while surveyed officers were open to the ideas of change in theory, they were more reluctant to support changes that would create new Services or devalue currently dominant military systems. Surveyed officers were often, though not always, reluctant to support changes that would diminish their Service and branch's dominant missions and platforms. "They will judge proposals for change by how they will affect their own career prospects" (Mahnken and FitzSimonds:140).

In the case of the Army, the inertia of its current culture and a failure to develop revolutionary doctrine appear to be the main barriers to real change. Although the Army describes a lofty vision of change, it leaves much ambiguity in its transformation focus areas. A true transformation would seem to call for a new doctrine like the "dominating maneuver" advocated by

COL Macgregor in "Breaking the Phalanx" (Macgregor: 36-37, 142-143, 147, 149) or MAJ Vandergriff in "The Path to Victory" (Vandergriff:14-16, 195-199, 210), rather than what Macgregor would describe as "attrition warfare" (Macgregor:6, 17, 37) or Vandergriff would describe as "synchronization warfare" (Vandergriff: 9-13, 70-73, 104-105, 116-118, 138-139, 146-148, 165). However, the Army seems to stay with a conventional vision of attrition-based warfare in its Army 2020 document ("Army in 2020":1). Most other Army 2020 concepts focus on advanced technology rather than the Soldiers and leaders who will use the systems. The CSA stresses Soldier and leader management, education, and professional development as keys to change (Schoomaker arrival message:2); however, personnel initiatives like the new manning policies don't seem to go far enough. Although UAs will benefit from unit stabilization, the reliance on the centralized individual replacement system (IRS) for all but the UAs seems to do little to alleviate overall turbulence and lack of cohesion. Even in the UAs, the injection of up to "8% replacements per year to make up for un-programmed losses" ("Force Stabilization Soldier Information Briefing":14) degrades the unit cohesion the Army is striving for, as shown by the Army's similar experience with the COHORT concept in the 1980s (Vandergriff: 126-134, 144-145, 147, 218, 268-270). Army 2020 concepts also offer no discussion on changing Army officer career patterns and do nothing to resolve the underlying "careerism" (Ibid:79, 90, 125, 263) and "individual before unit" mentality that permeate the Army's culture (Ibid:2, 75, 96, 110, 112, 132, 182, 232).

The Air Force faces its own barriers to transformation. The Air Force vision says it ensures that the process of developing air and space leaders produces officers with three grand competencies (USAF): one, that they are fully conversant with the Air Force's place in a changing world; two, that they are current in the evolving doctrine of warfare; and three, that they are

proficient in the line of specialty for which they are trained. The trouble is that the officers are very proficient in their own specialty, but when it comes to being conversant in how their Service fits into the joint environment and being current in evolving warfare doctrine, most remain quite handicapped.

As seems to be the case with much of the transformation conversation, there is much more talk than action. The Air Force claims a desire to develop leaders who "encourage innovation and drive the cultural adaptation necessary to realize the potential of transformation," while continuing to plod along as though the rest of the military should revolve around their way of doing business (Roche:2). A prime example is a follow-on statement from the Air Force Flight Plan: "Developing Air and Space Leaders spearheads the Air Force initiative to produce leaders who are committed to the advancement, support, employment, and sustainment of air and space power" (USAF:10). This does not sound like a goal that includes greater future jointness and an invitation to open up one's culture. There is even lipservice given to the career progression discussion by mentioning exposure to "broadening experiences." While several officers get opportunities to work in areas outside of their area of initial expertise, this is not the rule, and the experience may not be productive in the sense of joint training in another Service culture, but may simply be a blue collar square-filler job that doesn't advance DOD's pool of professional officers at all.

Even though personnel and their careers do not appear to be managed very well in relation to broadening the closed Service cultures, the Air Force does try to address universal competencies in its education system. An office called "Developing Air and Space Leaders (DAL)" works with the Education Training Review Council and the Air Force's major education centers to review curriculum seeking to ensure that the proper instruction is given at the right point in a

person's career (Ibid:10). The vision here is that it will create a future leader who is more "acclimated" to change and has a broader knowledge with a more creative mind to solve future problems (Roche:1). Of course, it is important to have a proper military education, but this system is certainly not encouraging the broadening of Air Force culture. Instead it is doing the opposite, indoctrinating Air Force members in the ways of Douhet and Warden, and deepening the cultural rift between it and the other Services.

Some of the barriers to transformation in the naval Services outlined in the August 2001 General Accounting Office (GAO) Report, "Military Transformation: Navy Efforts Should Be More Integrated and Focused," have been addressed with the issuance of the Naval Transformation Roadmap. Despite the stated desires of President Bush, Secretary Rumsfeld, and the Chief of Naval Operations to reinvent the military and to encourage risk-taking and visionary thinking, transformation experts at the Naval War College's Center for Naval Warfare Studies believe that the Navy's transformation efforts outlined in the Navy Transformation Roadmap are not transformational, but are instead better characterized as evolutionary or "modernization-plus" (Dombrowski:117-118). This is the one area highlighted by the GAO study that the Navy has yet to improve upon. In essence, the Navy's barrier to transformation may involve not having an adequately ambitious plan. As a result, many in the Navy believe transformation is not an issue of major consequence requiring a cultural or mindset shift, but is merely a continuation of an ongoing modernization process. This belief is understandable given the Navy's pursuit of a networkcentric rather than a platform-centric modernization plan; a plan driven by the difficult, costly, and time-consuming reality involved in procurement of new capital ships. Naval Postgraduate School is trying to stimulate more innovative thought by implementing the "Outliers" program. That program offers a safe haven for "controversial, even heretical, ideas" to "encourage really

radically new thinking about how to transform the military" and to "help visionary thinkers up and down the chain of command hone their envelope-busting visions for military transformation and bridge them into mainstream publications" (Honegger:1). The Naval Warfare Development Command also needs to be central to this type of initiative. Even as currently outlined in the Naval Transformation Roadmap, the Navy's modernization-plus approach, although perhaps less than transformational, provides the required naval capabilities to meet near-term threats (Dombrowski:118). One central question remains: How are the capabilities of a future, coherently joint force being affected by this less-than-transformational mindset and approach?

From a DOD perspective, related to the concern of maintaining or changing Servicespecific culture and parochialism and its effect on joint transformation is this notion of needing
to transform military culture with respect to fostering innovation and risk taking. Initiatives
similar to the "Outliers" program at the Naval Postgraduate School may be an answer. The DOD

Office of Force Transformation correctly recognizes that changing culture is the hardest part of
transformation and has sponsored workshops to identify the optimum cultural traits for a transformed DOD. However, those workshops have yet to clearly articulate the traits of a transformational defense culture.

The concept of a unique Service culture is quantified to some degree by surveys completed at JFSC. Each year, approximately 1,000 students are surveyed, and these officers represent each of the Services in roughly equal proportions (JFSC:11). The results show distinctly different perceptions for each of the Services and highlight some Service differences that inhibit a common joint force culture. As expected, the other Services see the Marines as the most disciplined force and the Air Force as the most technologically oriented Service. But of more concern is the perception that the Air Force is essentially the most biased and least disciplined as

judged by Army, Navy, and Marine officers. Although these perceptions are part of the natural interservice rivalry, they do not have a favorable impact on increasing jointness and assisting in the transformation process.

Are culture and parochialism important aspects to consider when assessing and looking at the future direction of transformation? VADM Cebrowski, director of DOD's Office of Force Transformation thinks so. Speaking about transformation, "[F]irst and foremost, it's about changes in human behavior rather than changes in equipment (Bowe:4)." In the foreward to the published TPG, Secretary Rumsfeld describes the task as transforming "not only the capabilities at our disposal, but also the way we think, the way we train, the way we exercise and the way we fight."

Recommendations to fully harness transformation benefits

Harnessing the full advantages of a lighter, more agile, expeditionary military includes making systems and mindsets more interoperable and encouraging an environment of innovation free from the consequences of failure (Boot:58).

Boot argues that transformation is "an ongoing process" that is by no means finished (Ibid:59). Others model transformation not as a new idea, but rather "a natural remodeling of all military operations given different political terrain and different strategy from new technologies" (Bowe:4). To place current efforts into a historical context, one could argue that military transformation has been taking place since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and the rise of the nation state and professional militaries. Many characterize today's environment as the fourth discrete generation of warfare since the seventeenth century, but who is to say that there won't be a fifth, sixth, and seventh generation? If one accepts this argument, then the waters can be muddied fur-

ther by asking, if transformation has been ongoing for almost 350 years, then isn't this really just an evolution in military affairs instead of transformation?

Whatever the process is called, to maximize its effects, many items need to be addressed to maximize the benefits for a truly joint force by reducing Service parochialism and the stigma to joint service that remains. Several issues involve changing organizational cultures and incentive structures that reward experimentation and innovation (Flournoy: 32). One initial way to change organizational culture is to change the promotion process. As long as officers of the same uniform and occupational specialty are the ones presiding over statutory promotion boards and administrative screening boards, Service allegiance, and specifically, occupational specialty allegiance and Service parochialism, will remain dominant. As a result, a joint evaluation and selection board process should be considered. In addition, although Goldwater-Nichols addressed the issue of stipulating limits on promotion rates, the importance of Joint Service Officers (JSOs) and those having served in joint tours needs to be elevated further. For example, instead of requiring only flag officers to be qualified JSOs, the requirement should be made a prerequisite for the rank of O-6. Such a revision would, in turn, require changes in several career paths to allow more time for officers to complete JSO requirements in their first 20 years of service. Also, although the TPG discusses measuring transformation progress in broad terms, specific metrics for the aspects of transformation also need to be defined. One system, the joint education system at JFSC, has been able to develop a specific metric to report a measure of jointness. This education system, with its curriculum centered on joint war planning for staff officers, has proven to be an effective way to modify individual mindsets and possibly realize a more joint force. JFSC pre- and post-course surveys show that by the end of each 12-week class, students' perceptions of themselves and their classmates' Services have shifted towards a more common

understanding. There is a significant statistical indication that these officers have become much more homogeneous in their thoughts about sister Services and less parochial about their own (JFSC:1). This joint training and education produces the desired joint "acculturation" and is of prime importance in the development of a joint force.

Another excellent option to maximize transformation benefits and improve the coherence of the joint force is to follow through on Secretary Rumsfeld's idea of consolidating bases into joint use compounds with multiple capabilities. If Congress can see its way through another round of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) proceedings with the will to concentrate missions physically, the military may be able to significantly increase its level of jointness in operations. This should still allow Services to maintain a measure of distinct cultural differences while eroding some of the separateness and incongruity in mission execution. In addition, necessities like medical and legal services and multiple base support functions can be performed more efficiently with less redundancy in facilities and personnel ("Army in 2020":7).

Conclusion

Transformation is clearly a difficult process. The goal of transformation is ultimately to prepare DOD to fight the next war instead of the last war. It is imperative to undertake this process now as the international security environment continues to change at an increasing pace. While all Services have agreed that it is necessary to transform, in the end, the process will inherently never be "complete." The ultimate factor in determining how successful transformation will be is how well the process is championed from both the top down and the bottom up. Change in any large organization takes time, and when an organization's culture resists the required change, the time to effect that change is even longer. Therefore, all military officers must

work to curb Service parochialism and cultivate a joint culture to maximize the benefits of transformation. And in the final analysis, regardless of the difficulty or the length of time involved, DOD must stay the course and transform to counter the increasingly adaptable threats of the twenty-first century.

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